

GOVERNOR O'MALLEY ANNOUNCES I-70 WIDENING PROJECT IN FREDERICK TO OPEN TO TRAFFIC

(October 1, 2013) – Governor Martin O'Malley today announces that the \$45 million I-70 widening project to improve travel for commuters and local residents will soon open to traffic. After two and a half years of construction, the Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (SHA) is preparing to open new lanes that will double the width of the highway by adding a third through-lane and an auxiliary lane in each direction to improve traffic flow in the area between the MD 144 and the MD 85/East Street interchanges. Motorists should be prepared for changing traffic patterns on I-70 in Frederick starting Friday, October 4, 2013 as SHA wraps up construction in the area of the South Street interchange.

"Investing in infrastructure statewide is crucial to improving safety, saving time and spurring economic development," said Governor O'Malley. "Thanks to Maryland's Congressional Delegation, this project will accomplish all three goals by improving travel on this critical east-west route."

The opening of the new westbound lanes is tentatively scheduled for this Saturday, October 5th with the new eastbound lanes opening on October 12th. In the event of inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, both openings may be pushed back by a week.

"I-70 is about to get a whole lot better for businesses, commuters and families traveling throughout western Maryland. I am proud of the robust investments we've made in making our transportation infrastructure safer and more reliable. They are paying dividends on Maryland's most congested roads and boosting economic development across the region," said U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Transportation Infrastructure Subcommittee. "Marylanders currently waste too much time, money and gas in gridlock. I'm proud that the federal government has been a partner with Maryland to modernize the key arteries that connect growing Frederick communities."

Drivers should allow extra travel time in the project area as crews prepare to shift traffic to its new configuration at the I-70/South Street/Monocacy Boulevard and I-70/MD 85/East Street interchanges.

"The opening of the I-70 widening project in Frederick County marks an important step for improving our region's infrastructure," said Congressman John K. Delaney. "By leveraging approximately \$44 million in federal investment, this project improves traffic flow, reduces congestion, and enhances access to the I-70 corridor. Smart infrastructure investments like this benefit thousands of people every day and help maintain our region's economic competitiveness."

After the new lanes open, crews will complete the final surface paving under single-lane closures between the hours of 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. over the next few weeks. Completion of this final paving is anticipated by the second week of November, weather permitting.

“These I-70 improvements will lead to a safer and more efficient commute along the corridor in Frederick,” said Congressman Chris Van Hollen. “The kind of federal funding that supported this project is critical for job creation and economic development across the state, and I will continue to work with the rest of our Congressional delegation to ensure that we make responsible investments in infrastructure to improve the transportation network for all Marylanders.”

The \$45 million project, known as “Phase 2D” of SHA’s I-70 Corridor Improvements, also included replacing the existing I-70 bridges over South Street and realigning the eastbound I-70 ramps to provide larger turning radii. Construction began in spring 2011. This route serves an average of more than 80,000 vehicles a day along this busy I-70 corridor. This project is the latest step in the State’s multiphase plan for improving the I-70 corridor. SHA’s contractor for the work is Corman Construction of Annapolis Junction. The project was more than 90% federally funded.

“I’m very happy that we are moving forward on this project,” said Del. Galen R. Clagett, Maryland State Delegate for District 3A. “It has been a wonderful addition to the county and the city and goes to show that Frederick does get its fair share of state and federal transportation funding.”

While SHA and its partners work hard to maintain safe traffic mobility in work zones, each driver needs to actively modify his or her driving style to help prevent crashes. Stay alert – look for reduced speed limits, narrow driving lanes and highway workers. Slow down and don't follow too closely. Safer Driving. Safer Work Zones. For everyone!

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